

# Transition Outcomes Projects



## Purpose

- Assist local schools in meeting IDEA's transition service requirements.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of providing and delivering transition services to students and families through the IEP process.
  - Provide training and resource materials on the transition process for educators, administrators, adult agency personnel, parents and others.
  - Improve graduation rates and post school outcomes of students with disabilities.
- 

## Why Focus on Transition Requirements?

- OSEP compliance.
  - Corrective actions in transition at the local levels.
  - Teachers struggle with understanding the requirements.
  - Commitment to preparing students and families for the challenges of the adult world.
  - Increase opportunities for students with disabilities to complete high school.
  - Provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful educational experiences to prepare them for post-secondary education, employment and independent living.
  - Promote a student-led IEP process.
  - To improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.
-

---

## Who Is Involved?

Over 1,000 school districts from 23 States/Regions across the United States

- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- BIA – Papago Agency, Sells, AZ; BIA system wide – fall 2003
- Colorado
- Cheyenne River Agency, Eagle Butte, SD
- Delaware
- Iowa – Northern Trails AEA
- Kansas
- Maine
- Maryland
- Michigan – TSP Statewide, Shiawassee ISD
- Minnesota – SW/WC Services Cooperative, Region 10
- Montana
- Nebraska – Grand Island, NE
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Pennsylvania
- South Dakota
- Texas – Region 19 ESC, El Paso
- Utah
- Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

---

## Transition Outcomes Project Uses a Data-driven Model That:

- Identifies and evaluates current practices used to meet transition requirements.
- Includes baseline data from students' IEPs as the context for goal setting, strategy development, and implementing a local school improvement plan.
- Promotes an IEP process driven by the student's post school goals.
- Emphasizes;
  - Improving transition services,
  - Increasing graduation rates,
  - Showing results and
  - Increasing the likelihood that student with disabilities will graduate and be employed.
- Empowers local school divisions to make changes in systems, processes, forms, programs, and approaches.

---

## Initial Results (February 2003)

- Baseline and final data from 7 States/regions
- Baseline N = 5,248 IEPs of students 14 years of age and older
- Final N = 2,452 IEPs of students 14 years of age and older
- Time period from baseline to final – 12 to 18 months

| Requirement  | Baseline | Final |
|--|----------|-------|
| Student Invitation                                 | 69%      | 94%   |
| Invitation of other agency                         | 17%      | 34%   |
| Other steps to obtain participation                | 14%      | 26%   |
| Statement of Transition Service Needs              | 46%      | 63%   |
| Statement of Needed Transition Services            | 71%      | 84%   |
| SNTS – coordinated set of activities               | 31%      | 61%   |
| SNTS – activities promote movement to post school  | 36%      | 64%   |
| Statement of interagency responsibilities/linkages | 32%      | 57%   |

---

## Transition Outcomes Project Starts with Commitment!

Schools must be willing to:

- Volunteer
  - Improve post-school outcomes for students
  - Formulate a team
  - Establish partnerships
  - Develop strategies for improvement
  - Be able to implement change
  - Participate in ongoing professional development
  - Provide access to files
  - Share what is learned
  - Participate in a 3-4 hour Report-Out meeting to set goals and develop strategies
- 

## Advantages!

- Voluntary
- Focused and manageable
- Systemic change
- Emphasis on program improvement not monitoring
- Clear and concise
- Training for local staff
- Follow-along and Follow-up
- Builds state and local capacity
- Ongoing professional development
- Uses periodic IEP reviews

- Promotes form and process changes
  - Empowers decision-making and solutions from within!
  - Involves local school division personnel (general and special educators), department of education personnel, adult service agency personnel, parents and students in the local improvement planning process
- 

## What Others Have Learned!

- Benefits schools!
  - Data show results
  - Ongoing professional development
  - New strategies for improving IEP meetings
  - Clearer understanding of the transition requirements
  - Better coordination of services
  - Opportunities to network, problem solve and share success, resources and effective approaches with others
  - Agencies are more involved in schools!
  - Forms changed!
  - Teachers excited and proud of their efforts!
  - People network!
  - Parents and students LIKE IEP meetings!
  - Best practices grow from compliance!
  - Creative solutions generated!
- 

## Teacher/Administrator Comments!

*Participation in the Transitions Outcome Project had a significant impact on the graduation rate of our special education students at Ronan High School...we now have significantly reduced the drop out rate and greatly increased the graduation rate....*

Maer Rubley, Special Education Teacher, Ronan, MT

*The Transition Outcomes Project has truly helped us focus our time and energy...instead of looking just at the success of the student in the classroom, we are focusing on the development of those skills into the community and future endeavors.*

Cheryl Junge, Special Education Teacher, Natrona School District, Casper, Wyoming

*Feedback from the teams is unanimous: This Project clarifies the transition requirements in IDEA for the first time. The process quickly identifies areas which need improvement and encourages the teams to think and plan creatively to eliminate the deficits by setting their own goals and strategies. As a result of participation in the Transition Outcomes Project, all 7 schools have made significant progress in the IEP process, and 6 have implemented new "programs" with a focus on community based vocational programs and interagency collaboration.*

Marjorie Eckman, Transition Facilitator, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Pittsburgh, PA

*As an Education Associate at DE DOE [Delaware Department of Education] for transition, this project and process has helped me to identify how well we, as a state, are doing in meeting student transition needs....most of all, this process has helped me meet my most important responsibilities, which are to help DE improve the graduation rate for students with disabilities and also improve the post-school success for these students.*

- *For five consecutive years, the dropout rate for special education students has decreased. Last week, I received the latest dropout data for the state, and for the first time the dropout rate for students in special education programs is less than the rate for general education students. Five years ago, it was double the rate of general education.*
- *Also, the numbers of students employed by the DE DVR has increased over 150% over this same period.*

*I can safely say that improved knowledge of transition requirements, improved inclusion of students in education decision-making, and improved communication by agencies at the building and classroom level has helped make the difference.*

Mark Chamberlain, Education Associate, Delaware Department of Education

*The true value of the of the TOP's [Transition Outcomes Project] project was best evidenced in the ongoing dialogue that occurred among special education staff and team members as they met to consider the districts baseline data compiled for the questions contained in the TOP Checklist. It is this dialogue combined with sustained and systemic staff development that led to the significant growth and improvement in our districts transition services and ultimately better outcomes for students!*

Hal Bloss, Supervisor of Special Education, Hazleton, PA

*The Transition Outcomes Project has had an immediate and lasting impact on the capacity of our teachers to adequately meet the needs of our students. Teachers have been very receptive to the training sessions and have been appreciative of receiving assistance on how to address each child's needs. Our follow up file reviews have indicated immediate improvement in those areas which have been emphasized in the training.*

Gary L. Van Hemert, Administrator, Mason City School District, Mason City, Iowa

*I have been involved with the TOPs Project in the Northern Trails AEA area since its inception. I had the original training...and was on the review teams covering the schools that I serve as a VR counselor.*

*The TOP project has been invaluable to me in my job from the standpoint of knowledge of the IEP and transition communication with the schools I serve. The project is very non-threatening to teachers and administrators and is presented that way. I have been amazed at the improvement that has been made in the area of transition by the individual schools. They have set goals and reached many of them. I have developed a better relationship with school personnel and in turn they have a better understanding of Vocational Rehabilitation and its role in transition.*

Marsha Mott, VR Counselor Mason City, IA